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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, November 1, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "PIES HIS MOTHER NEVER MADE." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

You've often heard the story of the poor young bride who tries to please her husband with his favorite dishes but never succeeds in making them quite as good as those his mother used to make. Told again and again, this familiar story always gets a sympathetic audience. Other wives hear it and sigh. But personally I prefer a more cheerful version of this tale. I like to hear about the clever young wife who avoided competition and comparison by serving him new favorites instead of old ones. Did she try to make her apple pie "just like Mother's?" Not she. She served him wonderful pies his mother never thought of making.

Well, maybe you have this mother-in-law situation in your home and maybe not. Anyway, perhaps you'd like to hear what's new in the pie line. Maybe you've been wanting a different pie for Sunday dinner. So here are a few pie ideas I have collected for you.

You can even depart from tradition in pie crust. The good old-fashioned cook would probably raise her hands in horror at the thought of pastry made from crumbs, sugar and melted fat, but just try your husband on a cream pie with a crumb crust some day and see if he doesn't think you are the world's best pie-maker. Crumb pastry is darker in color, sweeter, richer and more crumbly than ordinary pastry. You use neither flour nor water in it -- just fine graham cracker crumbs -- or fine dry oven-brown bread crumbs -- and sugar and melted butter. Then, instead of rolling the pastry out, you pat it into the pan because it is so crumbly.

Maybe you'd like to hear just exactly how the foods people at the Bureau of Home Economics make their crumb pastry. For 1 pie, they use 15 large graham crackers and roll them fine. Then, they add one-half cup of melted butter and one-half cup of sugar. They mix these 3 ingredients thoroughly and then save out about one-fourth cup of the mixture to sprinkle over the meringue of the pie. The rest of the mixture they place in a pie-tin and pat it out until it forms a thick, even lining on the inside of the pan. They bake this in a moderate oven -- that is, 350 degrees Fahrenheit -- for about 10 minutes, or until it caramelizes a little. Then, they take it out of the oven and give it another gentle patting. This crumb pastry has a way of blistering as it bakes. So as soon as it comes from the oven, they just pat it smooth. Then, they let the crust cool before putting in the cream filling and the meringue over the top.

As I said, here's something different in pie crusts. And you can use it in many different kinds of pie. Some like crumb crust filled with fresh fruit and whipped cream. Others say it is most delicious with a pumpkin filling. My favorite use is in cream pie. I like that dark rich crumb-crust as a background for plain cream filling, or banana cream, or coconut cream.

Well, so much for crust. Now what's new in fillings -- fillings his mother never made? If she's a real old-fashioned cook, the chances are she didn't bring him up on chiffon pie. Chiffon pie is a truly modern variety of pie. Old-time housekeepers couldn't buy gelatin in convenient forms as we do today. What's more, they had no modern refrigerators for chilling gelatin mixtures. Chiffon filling is a fluffy, spongy, delicious, whipped-gelatin mixture. It's really what we call a gelatin "sponge." You make it generally with fruit juice, sugar, gelatin and white of egg.

Probably the most popular of these pies is lemon chiffon. This is simply a lemon jelly which you allow to chill and become partly solid and then beat up with stiff egg whites. Fill a baked pie crust with this mixture and set it in the refrigerator to chill.

Other tart fruit juices also make delicious chiffon pies. Cranberries for example. The cranberry crop is large this fall. So here's the season to indulge in cranberry pie to your heart's content. Cranberries make a beautiful rose-colored chiffon pie. Give your husband just one look and one taste and you'll make a chiffon-pie enthusiast of him.

Another interesting gelatin pie is chocolate chiffon. Serve this with whipped cream over the top. It makes a good company pie. I've heard of pumpkin chiffon pie, too, just recently, but I've never tried it.

Now one point about all these whipped gelatin pies. They're not so rich as many old-time pies. They have only one crust. And the gelatin mixture itself is light. The bullsbes whipped in cut down on calories. For the members of the family young and old who can't get away with a hearty pie, chiffon is a better choice.

If you prefer a top crust to a bottom crust, remember the deep-dish pies. Did you ever try deep-dish cranberry pie? It looks a good deal like deep-dish cherry pie. Did you ever try deep-dish crab-apple pie? There's another good variation of an old favorite.

If your husband is an apple-pie addict, maybe you'd like to hear a few other ways to vary this pie. To make a rich and different apple pie, add chopped walnut meats or pecans. Use about half a cup of nuts to 1 quart of apples and add them with the sugar. Or use currants or raisins in the same proportion as nuts. Another still richer variation is apple-mince pie. Use half sliced apples and half mince-meat for the filling, placing them in alternate layers on the lower crust. Add no sugar unless the apples are very tart indeed.

For the youngsters who can get away with a little pie crust but not too much, apple-sauce pies are a treat. Bake individual pie-crust shells and fill them with apple sauce. A dab of red jelly on top makes a cheerful decoration.

To vary the flavor of your fall pumpkin pie, use honey or maple sirup for sweetening.

So don't despair if you can't make the pies like those his mother made. As far as I've been able to find out, a new pie is invented every day. And many of these new pies will appeal to him just as much as the old timers.

